

Welcome Skills Limited

Monitoring visit report

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Type of provider: Independent learning provider

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Monitoring visit: main findings

Context and focus of visit

From October 2018, Ofsted undertook to carry out monitoring visits to all newly directly funded providers of apprenticeship training provision which began to be funded from April 2017 or after by ESFA and/or the apprenticeship levy. This monitoring visit was undertaken as part of those arrangements and as outlined in the *Further education and skills inspection handbook*, especially the sections entitled 'Providers newly directly funded to deliver apprenticeship training provision' and 'Monitoring visits'. The focus of these visits is on the themes set out below.

Welcome Skills Limited began trading in 2004, offering hospitality training to the Asian restaurant sector as a subcontractor. Its head office is in Sanderstead, South London. Welcome Skills Limited became a prime contractor in June 2017 and began recruiting its first apprenticeships in January 2018. It currently delivers the level 2 hospitality team member and production chef standards. There were 329 apprentices on programme at the time of the monitoring visit, and, so far, none has completed an apprenticeship.

Themes

How much progress have leaders made in ensuring that the provider is meeting all the requirements of successful apprenticeship provision?

Insufficient progress

Leaders and managers do not design or plan programmes that enable apprentices to make good progress or gain substantial new skills and knowledge. Managers do not assess apprentices' skills and knowledge sufficiently at the beginning of their programmes to ensure the apprenticeship meet their needs. More experienced apprentices, such as restaurant owners, complete the same programme over the same time as those newer to the industry. Trainers do not encourage more knowledgeable or able apprentices to complete sooner. Consequently, their rate of progress is too slow.

Leaders and managers do not have oversight of the delivery and quality of programmes. They do not gather data with which to identify swiftly apprentices' progress, nor do they monitor the frequency of apprentice reviews or attendance at training sessions. Recording of the off-the-job training is inconsistent and too many employers are unclear about when this takes place.

Apprentices are not fully prepared for their end-point assessment and they do not all know when this will take place. Trainers do not mark or grade assessments, and apprentices are not aware that they can achieve high grades.

Leaders and managers have a strong commitment to reach young people from the Bangladeshi community who have low educational attainment. They aim to help them gain formal training and qualifications in the hospitality sector. The managing director has built a strong reputation among restaurant owners and national stakeholders and has increased apprentice numbers rapidly. This is redressing staff shortages and helping to professionalise the sector.

Apprenticeship programmes are compliant with the requirements of funding bodies, but the employer commitment statements do not specify the hours required for off-the-job training. The vast majority of apprentices remain on their programmes, while the few who leave do so to follow alternative employment.

What progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that apprentices benefit from high-quality training that leads to positive outcomes for apprentices? Insufficient progress

Not all apprentices are aware that they are on an apprenticeship programme. Many do not speak good English and struggle to describe the training they are undertaking. More experienced apprentices are not taught substantial new skills, but they do increase their knowledge. For example, they develop their understanding of cross-contamination and allergens. Employers mainly value the apprenticeship for the opportunity it gives their staff to gain regulatory qualifications in food safety and food hygiene rather than enabling their career progression.

Apprentices make slow progress towards completing their programmes. Trainers do not have enough awareness of what apprentices can already do and what they know, in order to adapt their training for each individual. Apprentices with very poor English language skills are unable to demonstrate what they have learned. Trainers do not develop apprentices' knowledge and use of English sufficiently. Too many apprentices who require functional skills English and mathematics qualifications undertake these too late into their programmes.

Trainers do not plan off-the-job training well enough and it is not of a high enough standard. In group training sessions, trainers spend too much time discussing with apprentices what they would like to cover rather than teaching knowledge that is relevant to apprentices' workplaces. As a result, apprentices are not always clear about how to apply what they learn.

The standard of assessment is weak. Trainers use professional discussions and questioning too superficially to assess accurately apprentices' competences. They do not stretch apprentices to further improve. Trainers do not check written work for the quality of spelling or grammar.

Many apprentices enjoy their apprenticeships and value the support they receive. Trainers are well qualified and have recent experience within the hospitality industry.

They motivate apprentices who have few previous qualifications to value their studies and to continue studying after completing their apprenticeship.

How much progress have leaders and managers made in ensuring that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place? Insufficient progress

Leaders and managers do not promote safeguarding arrangements effectively. Not all staff have undergone disclosure and barring checks to the level required for working with younger learners. In a few cases, managers allow these checks to expire before renewing them. Policies covering safeguarding and the 'Prevent' duty are in place.

Apprentices feel safe, but they do not know to whom they should report concerns. Trainers do not prioritise safeguarding sufficiently throughout the programme, and, consequently, apprentices do not have an understanding of how to keep themselves safe. They do not understand the dangers of radicalisation or extremism, or how these relate to working in the hospitality sector.

Staff undertake a broad range of external professional development, including training on the 'Prevent' duty, domestic violence and British values, but managers do not obtain accurate records of those who have completed these courses.

Managers carry out comprehensive risk assessments on employers' premises to ensure they are safe workplaces for apprentices.

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